

**WE CLAIM:**

1. An aqueous antimicrobial composition for disinfecting, sanitizing or cleaning surfaces, comprising:

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- (a) about 0.5% to 10% by volume of at least one essential oil exhibiting antimicrobial properties in a water carrier;
- (b) about 2 to 12% by volume of a solvent sufficient to form an aqueous mixture of the essential oils in the water carrier;
- (c) sufficient water to make up 100% by volume; and
- (d) about 1 to 1000 ppm of an agent for introducing ions into the water, wherein the ions enhance the antimicrobial properties of the at least one essential oil.
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2. The composition defined in claim 1, wherein the ion agent is selected from the group consisting of copper sulfate, cupric carbonate, and colloidal silver.

15 3. The composition defined in claim 1, wherein the ion agent is copper sulfate.

4. The composition defined in claim 1, comprising about 10 to 100 ppm of the ion agent.

5. The composition defined in claim 1, wherein the at least one essential oil is selected from the group consisting of thyme oil, lemongrass oil, clove oil and eucalyptus oil, and mixtures thereof.

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6. The composition defined in claim 4, comprising about 2% to 3.25% by volume of the solvent.

7. The composition defined in claim 4, comprising about 0.05 to 0.50% by volume of a surfactant.

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8. The composition defined in claim 1, wherein the ions are groundwater ions.

9. The composition defined in claim 8, wherein the ion agent is copper sulfate.

10. The composition defined in claim 1, wherein the at least one essential oil comprises a mixture of essential oils.

11. The composition defined in claim 10, wherein the mixture of essential oils comprises about 0.07 to 2.5% by volume of thyme oil, and about 0.20 to 2.5% by volume of clove oil.

12. An aqueous antimicrobial composition for disinfecting, sanitizing or cleaning surfaces comprising:

- (a) about 0.5% to 10% by volume of at least one essential oil exhibiting antimicrobial properties in a water carrier;
- (b) about 2 to 12% by volume of a solvent sufficient to form an aqueous mixture of the essential oils in the water carrier;
- (c) sufficient water to make up 100% by volume; and
- (d) about 1 to 1000 ppm of an agent for introducing groundwater ions into the water.

13. The composition defined in claim 13, comprising about 10 to 100 ppm of the ion agent.

14. The composition defined in claim 13, wherein the ion agent is copper sulfate.